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Dr. William Porterfield Jr. Dies; Ethnobotanist Served the C.I.A.

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WASHINGTON, March 26—*and for the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture.*

Dr. William M. Porterfield Jr., an ethnobotanist and former senior intelligence officer with the Central Intelligence Agency, died of a heart attack on Thursday at his home. He was 72 years old.

Dr. Porterfield, who was born in Harrisburg, Pa., received a B.A. degree in 1914 and an M.A. in 1915 from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa. He began his career as a teaching missionary in China, where he served on the faculty of St. John's University in Shanghai. He later did research at the University of Vermont's agricultural experimental station in Burlington, at the New York Botanical Gardens in the Bronx

He had published numerous articles in scientific journals. His field, ethnobotany, is the study of plants as related to the customs of a race.

During World War II Dr. Porterfield was technical editor with the Army Engineers in New York and afterward editor of the joint intelligence studies publishing board staff at the Army Map Service here. After he retired from the C.I.A. in 1963 he became a research consultant for George Washington University.

Dr. Porterfield received a Ph.D. degree from Columbia University.